

TV CANDIDS

by Terrence O'Flaherty

MGM is busy these days turning its old scripts into television series. First there was "The Thin Man," "Northwest Passage" and "National Velvet." Now there's "Dr. Kildare," and soon there'll be Angela Lansbury in "Min and Bill"—presumably the role made famous by Marie Dressler.

While MGM is in the mood, I have a suggestion: Why not remake "Rasputin and the Empress" as a television series? We all remember that charming old film about the nasty monk with the beard and the bad breath who liked to toss down a few and then hypnotize the Czarevitch and a few ladies-in-waiting at the same time. It has everything—sex, violence, costumes and history.

It would be impossible to replace the three Barrymores, who have now gone on to the Great MGM in the Sky, but they were far too old to interest the television audience of today anyway. In the television version I would make the characters considerably younger to give the teen-agers something to identify with.

Most of them are so poorly educated these days that any historical distortion won't be noticed until long after the series is off the air. By then it will be too late because a whole new—and larger—generation will have grown up believing it to be true.

Pat Boone has learned how to kiss girls and is said to be seeking more mature roles these days and I think he'd make a fine young Rasputin. It may be difficult to believe that anyone who got his start on the Arthur Godfrey Show could be responsible for the downfall of the Russian Imperial family, but Bud Weston can do wonders.

Inasmuch as most Americans now associate beards with beatniks I think Boone's Rasputin should be clean shaven. Housewives who spend \$60 million a year on detergents and deodorants would never be able to identify themselves with a woman who kisses a man with a beard. Remember, "Rasputin and the Empress" must be BELIEVABLE for an hour each week for 39 weeks out of the year with reruns on the other 13.

Ethel Barrymore was fine as the Empress in a day before television but we must remember the Czarina was the mother of a young boy and far too old-looking for the girl-mother image now well established by the TV commercials. In other words, the Empress should be a PAL to the Czarevitch.

I would suggest Donna Reed as being about as mature as the medium will stand and she's a dandy little actress to boot.

Natasha, the lady-in-waiting with whom Rasputin dallied, is a role MGM would just as soon forget because the actual lady was still alive in the '30s. She sued MGM for anguish and received a settlement of several millions.

A similar situation could be avoided in the television series by making Natasha and Rasputin drinking partners only and casting Annette Funicello in the part. Anyone who remembers her as one of the Mouseketeers knows SHE wouldn't get in trouble.

John Barrymore was Prince Paul Chegodieff in the film. Inasmuch as Elvis Presley has been generally considered as the one to take Barrymore's place in Hollywood these days, I think he'd make a fine Prince in the TV version. He could even play a few musical numbers on his guitar—sort of fiddling while Moscow burns.

The Czar can be played by an older actor because NOBODY wants to associate with him. Ozzie Nelson would be fine if he doesn't smile too much. The role of the young Czarevitch could be aged to accommodate Sal Mineo's acting talents—say to about 15 years.

With a cast like that and background music by the Don Cossack Choir, it could turn forever! And the sponsors would love the plot because there are no minorities to get offended. The White Russians aren't organized and everyone hates the Reds.

LIFE'S LIKE THAT By FRED NEHER



"Did Parcel Service leave a package while I was gone?"

TALK OF THE WORLD

DUBLIN—The Irish believe that marriages are made in heaven, but they would like to see the production process speeded up. For the marriage rate in Ireland is among the world's lowest and no way has been found for raising it. Marriage counselling is still almost unknown here and the marriage bureau business is in its babyhood.

Hopes tend to turn on the matchmaker. For centuries

the matchmaker—who brought partners together and arranged marriage settlements for them among their parents—was an essential functionary in every rural parish in the country. Like the citizens of other countries Irish young people in time came to feel that they could choose their husbands or wives quite well without any help.

Few men in the world can

find the job of meeting a suitable bride as difficult as does the Irish farmer. Part of the trouble is that among Irish farming folk over a large part of the country no successful substitute for the matchmaker has been found. It was no surprise to the Irish when a United Nations survey showed that 31 per cent of the male Irish population in the 45 to 54 group are single—the highest proportion in the world. In County Limerick, one of Ireland's wealthiest farming counties, 60 per cent of the men between 18 and 45 are unmarried. Few men marry there

under 35 years and the average bridegroom is 10 years older than his bride. Dr. Louis Smith, a genial agriculture economist, sees the problem as an economic one. He says that many of our farmers and farmers' sons simply cannot afford to get married. He shows that the more land a farmer has the more likely he is to marry, while only 3 1/2 per cent of farmers' sons in the 25 to 29 age group, who are still living with their parents, are married. He says agriculture is the lowest paid occupation

in the country. "Fate is fine, but there's no harm in helping it," said a mother of five young children near Castlebar and who met her husband through a matchmaker. She had a small farm. The matchmaker contacted a farmer's son, 30 years old, in a neighboring parish. He had 500 pounds and was anxious to spend it on stocking and improving any farm into which he might marry. Though the low marriage rate is Ireland's gravest social problem, it is not likely that matchmaking will ever become common again.

Jon Provost to Appear Sunday In Hawthorne

Jon Provost, star of television's Lassie series, will be at the Hawthorne Community Fair Sunday, July 21, from 2 to 4 p.m. Provost will autograph pictures during the two-hour stay. A photographer will be on hand to take pictures with Provost at \$1 each. All proceeds from the sale of pictures will go to the Southwest Community Health Clinic for use in child guidance work.

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